

# Climbs & Diving

33 poems by Jason Eric Jensen



I.

Is it not fascinating  
When a life becomes a postscript  
Of its own double-dipped life  
Every hour becomes a document of culminated breaths  
Attached to the nil value of flux  
Cascading down waterfalls guarded by law  
Castrating the effervescent buzz of libertines  
Where phlegm and pharynx dissuade ambition  
That's where the narrator approaches cemeteries  
Throwing maraschino cherries at zombies  
Through a masqueraded view of love and bombs  
Dropped simultaneously into wells  
Dug from under outdated eurocentric sensibilities  
That futile aftereffect of refuting syntax  
Where I lie face up in a sunlit vestibule  
To confront my unlived years with half-greetings  
Where secret stars tryst with a certain demonology  
How I abhor the miasma of a media declaring  
**YOU ARE NOT YET BEAUTIFUL**  
I yell to the roadside's billboards otherwise  
Afterwards, women and men in cars stare out  
Numbed by a novocaine of ennui

II.

The sidewalks I walk on  
Surround me to lift me up in a swoop  
Then deny categorization of my mysteries  
The listkeeper in me  
Conspires with all evenly numbered streets  
Following the scent of ruined architectures  
Into a burnt out algorithm of hollyhocks  
Blossoming from ribcages  
Blossoming from internal organs

III.

The eviction of my doorbell  
Leaves the visitor scrambling for a knocker  
I'm living in a convex dilapidated cavern  
To be different than everyone, and interesting  
This view is beautiful or off  
Ghost and macaw, meet vodka  
Six billion people in this world  
Living out their own brands of occasional poetry  
Two fall from the nimbus  
To land on their faces into a mockery of love proper

IV.

What occupies the avenues besides tenants  
Is a heavily restrained residue, of strawberry-blonde  
Eyeglasses on the faces of streamers  
Cautioning the wind for once to fuck off  
To give way for a noun-heavy parade of declarations  
Veering through dead television space  
Into a briar of shrapnel, crystalline frailty intact

V.

This fixed velvet tragedy  
Is not trauma to share  
With friends bent on subterranean cool  
Can we not argue with fixtures  
But enjoy their space  
Forgoing competition  
The fountain in city center with oversized labia  
Swaying her hips  
To a rhythm of squeaking brakes  
Including jazz, mist-laden meter of rain  
Thinking of darts  
Thinking of flame  
Thinking of wet glossiness  
Glimmering off the backs of our drumfills  
Where oxygen and carbon dioxide do battle  
Their proxy eventide confessions  
Combatant and typecast  
In a confluence of loneliness

VI.

Miles from 331 S. 16<sup>th</sup> St. # 1R  
One might find me  
Climbing into calendars  
Comprised of journals  
To set myself up in iambs of sugar

Because I want to live for free for now  
I can recall only one name  
As I dive from the precipice  
Of one chartreuse liquid-glaze glow

VII.

A perforated sense of entrapment  
Idling in the chambers of calamity  
Xeroxed and packaged, navigate me by radar  
Radar, takes me wayside  
Resting facedown in cherry barristers  
Where the words in that proximity always wow me  
Unlike those who reflect opalescence in a negative light  
The frame of a black car  
Frames the rafters of my new slant  
Where specters rise from cinders of literary allusions  
Into a choir of poultry I inhabit

VIII.

The frosty February purr  
Mixed with kerosene vapors  
Is an addicted skipping pattern  
Feeling the swelter of sweated cities  
Hark, metropolis, neverender of streets!  
Marching down salvos of tapestries  
To convulse with a style  
Unlike the parents of Volkswagens  
I live at half the poverty level  
That's not a bragging right  
Or a mere statement, I exist  
Hey now reclusive dissident  
Classified under canine  
In a dominantly feline system  
Hiding in filing cabinets  
Sweating rivulets of vodka  
I'm dying to tell you I'm dying  
Of apertures  
Of punctuation  
Of springtime in a polarized magnetic strife

IX.

All these cities  
All these streetlamps  
If I concentrate on my mailbox  
Good things will come  
Methadone  
Modest methods  
Whatever needs to be done

There is a stairway in Goleta  
Overlooking the town  
The kids are drunk always  
In milk flats glazed with blood drops  
Cleverly sequestered  
They abandon the Plains

X.

Yesterday in the gallows was today  
The magazine by-line hurried a red hello  
To the tired poems happening and passing by  
I was sending them in soda to sand  
As a conduit, I'm skirting a theory  
Chasms I live in unstitched by stigmata  
A lampshade tipped over an ocean  
The rapture of a tulip's saliva  
Arms caught in an international tangle  
Dilemmas abbreviating one person's schism  
Does red paint stick like licked stamps?  
Procured on protracted hollers?

XI.

To my ambition, I apologize for sleeping  
I just have so few hours anymore  
To the cellar rat, someone adores you  
To the comatose evenings we've viewed  
Through comet-strewn periscopes,  
I've been meaning to write  
No one knows my ink and ploy  
Stamping halos in little boxes back to sender  
I reel down the avenue proudly, dumbly  
Genius is curiosity at a gazelle's tempo  
Gliding along the sonar of starfish  
Propagating to the elasticity of eternity  
Falling asleep algebraically in calculus class  
A vector space that is also a ring

XII.

The eyelids in our quips are ours  
This kitchen we sit in is fictional  
In the safety of paperclipped minds  
We cower behind fire hydrants  
Slight duress dwells in foggy places  
Ours and hours, these simple minutes  
Cumulating over twentyplus Halloweens

XIII.

My poems are songs  
And you're the music

XIV.

With diuretic eyelids you cannot  
Pass an aneurysm through the body  
And wish stigmata unto others  
Take this shaving cream for instance  
The syndromes the city coughs  
Into this collected pavement  
And the freeways collapse always  
Into their synapses' fallen alleys  
1:14 is the a.m. wooden tempo  
Problem poetics dashed in half  
The discotheque is ossified English  
Learning to relearn humidity  
Is no one radiant enough to recall  
Technicolor as a trademarked bribe

XV.

Driving nails into arctic climes  
To fracture a kaleidoscopic earth  
The clusters of tripwire commingling  
Different alibis for different days  
Today's tidal pull opts for crazy  
So hooray! For my favorite amethyst  
Neighbors, and bioluminescent jellyfish  
Hung along the strung out jetty's sigh  
Who can quote Sonnet 116 before  
The Bible can throw out its hand's  
Rock, Paper, and Scissors  
They're all vying for us, so can we repel  
The Rolling Rock, the rolling papers  
That divvy up the delicate bend of light  
Of night receiving you with grace  
Climbing through city's winter climes

XVI.

Under New Jersey one might capture  
A pavement of exiled dreamcatchers  
Into which I spin harmoniously  
Thoroughfares aflame with speedometers  
Say, hey whetstone, allow me to see you  
Among a rendezvous of caterpillars  
Cast into the spur of glitterati  
A flurry of camouflaged eighth notes

Articulated in a cameo of soda espionage  
I cannot watch you yawn under this awning  
Without completely spazzing into the air  
Lean over and listen for my new light  
Broadcasting paper laurels into forever  
When at 24 love is a removed idle mode  
We must shuttle daffodils into landfills  
Revise our misunderstandings of anatomies  
And think of life aflame, don't we  
That's what's happening now, can you see

XVII.

I don't want to unlearn my favorite driveway  
The rivulets of sky cast from the hammer  
That give me my fix  
Stipends of metronome that besiege the timing of a blood flow  
Because a granite nightshade grows under my bed  
To somehow make away with a lemon-lime blend of life functions  
I look around to see if anyone is watching  
And I enter into the blessed abyss  
Leering, unable to locate the map I call  
My pulse and cannot find my measure  
Clambering up the grottoes only to slip back  
Into my reverie of floating in base solutions  
I repeat my name. I recoil from the ashes  
The infinity in my breath sends metroplexes  
Back into the sands of anyplace you call your home  
Because your boulevards haunt my carbon  
It seems to me I was falling for a long time  
But I heard nocturnes through it all  
The off-kilter meter of Rancocas Woods' looping byways  
The atoms surrounding my entryway shivering in gales  
At the sight of my phantom rising  
At the phenomena of oil surrounding the lopsidedness  
That is 4:43 a.m. admitting its error of question marks  
Too much distraction lapping at the lips of delay  
Even a collapse can be a perfectly beautiful display

XVIII.

Hipster kiddies rafting these lisp-fire tributaries  
Of very chromatic highly fuckable alleys  
Aren't waning/aren't ever affected  
Greeting old meridians with new art museums  
I high-five gravediggers and tip the homeless  
After dinner I chew peppermint  
And clear my throat to declare  
"These are the last of our Frank O'Hara nights!"  
On the first of April  
The first of your non-arctic author's nights

Of scurried street dwelling  
The aforeblurred tributaries are wonderful  
If the city is a lightbulb and I'm a filament  
Then that too is something wonderful, like  
You

XIX.

You, who lulls in a harness of duress  
Whose signature plans the dénouement of Walnut Lane  
Looking never fully fettered  
In the narrow alibi of rhododendron eerie eventide  
You  
Who caulks this velvet fracture of gravity  
In dactyls of staring I can forever encourage  
Like indoor endorphins  
Exiting an outdoor body of carbombs  
This distilled architecture of flame can be all yours  
Is not celestial hierarchy  
It's different here in the caves I call home  
In the refracted clasp of hologram

XX.

The 4:40 southpaw soundtrack of fluid  
Public music  
Droning provincial gift of null  
Offering zero to the necklace-shorn setting  
In a fucked abdication of googolplex  
Bisected for us by just one silent soliloquy  
To invade a vantage point of nectarines  
During autumn's humming cashmere handgrenade  
Surrogate sugar  
Exploding vitamins  
A fine film of cobwebs  
Slung upon the retired cortex of American intelligentsia  
Living in the dust claps of Rittenhouse Square  
Forever accursed with administrative assistants  
Huffing up molehills  
To reach a summit of velour  
Only to claw away at their mercurial position  
With a plastic spork as a right hand  
And as a left, a vocabulary of complaints

XXI.

People's Choice  
Motherfucker of the Year  
1979 - Forever  
Crystallized, popular  
I didn't think I could win again

So I didn't prepare a speech  
But what is winning anyway  
But a commitment to evil  
I prefer pivoting  
In the comfort  
Of all Wednesdays  
Of all time  
Bothering my neighbors  
With insatiable enthusiasm  
For the divinity of lilies,  
Of Tibet, of seraphs, of  
Scott David Hammer, of the  
Tacony-Palmyra Bridge  
I'll traverse it by foot  
To begin a list of air  
It's a lot to think about

XXII.

Leering from the Whitman-infused dynamo of insects  
Pollinating lightbulbs with filaments  
Is a mirror mosaic just above the girders,  
The scaffolding, and heretics below  
Reflecting starlight onto passersby  
All in love with futures traders  
Looping the adventure of phantasmagoria mid-stride  
In a lavender-honeysuckle whitewashed neighborhood  
Like a line  
Break or simile so obvious it's hard not to disregard

XXIII.

There are protons charging down chance's cemeteries  
Throwing confetti about in haphazard forays of light

I've been sleeping so much lately, my plot's thinning  
Outside, owls are perched out, and streets are denying

Sleep  
Music  
Luck  
Reason

XXIV.

Twin Rivers' twin infinitives' enchanted intellect asks  
How hard can a blast of bees be in falsetto  
Not hard if you're a ventriloquist mouthing out  
Vocabularies of someone else's abandoned life  
A memoir of whirligigs/no wind /no zero/no wind  
A rural route unmasked on national television

Unwillingly a vendetta of inventions  
If I reinvent you one more time  
What will I have  
If I indent this idea of flame  
If I capitulate to repetition trumpeting her rivets  
Then what have I  
But the handicap of a faraway hypothesis  
Narrowsighted and tucked away in Pennsylvania somewhere  
Stampeding through a vacuum  
In a cropduster dropping valium  
To celebrate the mantra of one clumsy manifesto  
Comprised strictly of alliterative student verse  
Is there nothing worse  
Than falling so in love, and could I ever answer for that  
I know some people fall in love  
With all of their lovers, is there nothing sadder  
Every singular episode of lavender, of maroon, of crimson  
Of blood swilling around the light of a confectionery fuck  
If there ever were a damnation to call home  
Laminate this city-pink air, xerox this poem  
And plaster it unto the wall  
On Broad and Pine in the blithe SWAT team environ  
Where a screwed on sign reads POST NO BILLS  
There everyone will see the honeysuckle-lavender  
Debauchery I might never answer for, named ( PERSONAL NOUN )

XXV.

Can we even navigate  
The triumph of the helix  
Just how biting a lip  
How we never notice  
The long morning opinions  
With detachable faces  
Tired images  
Everyone's hungry  
I could confer  
With various histories  
Before the biography  
Of postwar America  
Can we even eschew  
The mahogany premise  
Of achievement  
Shaking me, a shrink-  
Wrapped mental state  
Is this your landscape  
Or just a backdrop  
For a system of tripping  
And where've I been  
lately? Chatting up nocturnes

With poor penmanship  
Mouthing out illegibly  
To fritter an invective  
I drove a blade  
Through my thigh  
To corroborate my story  
We used to cheer  
At the falling NATO bombs  
It shows the atoms moving  
Slowly, we're learning now  
To x-ray the double helix

XXVI.

The highways starve in their collapsing faults  
Teased back, enraptured by moss  
By crossing my seed with an offramp  
Traffic patterns resemble a bevy of sleepwalkers  
Slinking into models of dissatisfaction  
Interfering with the locution of doves  
Others write in revile of the pal system  
As I gallivant into valleys of watermelons  
Of pigeons, of Energizer Bunnies, of ivy  
The brake lights refract into dead space  
Where harbors negotiate the neon of antifreeze  
To create an impression of sheer conceit so no one  
Can understand their own sixteenth streets of history  
Pulse and map, all's intact, where's little brother?  
If I can no longer inhabit the divine  
Than the line to Versailles just got that much shorter  
Yet giddier than the breath of my rolodex  
Gracious if only proper for the sake of others  
I'm pushing isinglass into the doe-eyed dirt  
To create a solution of underbellies  
Putting the words on the page for now  
The Centers for Disease Control can sort it out later

XXVII.

60 MPH into a fake brick median strip  
In a speeding car that cannot locate a lighthouse  
Guarding against the jowls of tomorrow  
The 50% vampire in me  
The 50% werewolf in me  
Haunt the 100% listkeeper in me  
Subletting my autobiography for pennies  
If only to create a new list of cheat codes  
Combing a receded superstructure over  
Itself, my brother/my blood, heavens, heavens  
All of this bitterness ices the core of my ability  
Now try and melt me, and what have you

Is it not 11:06 p.m. on Sunday anymore?  
You caught me considering the terms of disaster  
With phantasm and a notebook-scratched opinion  
My lexicon of violins is busy retooling a requiem  
For a bloodline with the courage to rhyme with orange  
In unanticipated deluges of English climbs and dives  
From which you yawn under your awning  
To watch me completely spaz into the air

XXVIII.

Crawling away now from the seafoam hue  
Of the typewriter embankment  
Into Anyone Really's gracelessly sad embrace  
With aquifers supplanting my audience of pets  
They welcome me like rivers  
Or delusions of Alaska  
Bracelets of shells  
Highways of honeycombs looping the tramline outposts  
Paolo was a gala apple  
With a glow-in-the-dark compass  
It concerns me  
I'm the author of anyone's life, sometimes  
When I think of you, I think so hard  
Because it can be so hard just to hold in the air  
Ten million stops at gas stations  
The big sky  
The maelstroms of fireworks that hint at my constellations, coming like a curse into the  
vagina of my journal's femme indigo  
Those conifers  
Hallucinating the twilight  
The late night driver in us  
The 24-hour drive-thru pharmacy in us  
They all say the same things in your sleep  
They all weigh the same weight  
Because it can be so hard  
Just to hold back the glaring  
Attached to your name

XXIX.

Among a rendezvous of caterpillars  
I take to the butterfly knife streets  
And occupy my throat with waking  
There are things to notice occurring  
Like spindles of hemp wire a'spin  
Like the vandalized factory complex  
Like slideshows of syrup in a tweaked  
Likeness of maudlin, black eyes, x  
Variables in a sedition from algebra  
Establishing vicars for new vectors'

Spaces, vacuums, plains, and Long  
Beach Island renounces its private  
Beaches if only to appear slightly  
Polite, that being the new insincerity  
The mid-city hall cleanup is going  
The multi-chambered pistil fires  
Lilies into graveyards of pedestrians  
I am zombies and zombies' children  
A butterfly knife in the vector street  
Among a rendezvous of caterpillars

XXX.

Diving upwards into  
Dialects of insecticide  
Apricots strapped in and  
Hinged over the skyways  
Infusing love into a mode  
I scripted a plot twist  
Days sounded out in echo  
Except at night, then my poems  
Climb into driveways  
And October  
And May falling  
From celestial bodies

XXXI.

At the photo show people  
Do move around  
The diner coffee in me  
Suggests a rendezvous  
With impulses' fractured glass hindsight  
She's amber-oxygenated  
A mystery of guillotines and suffering  
Skin pulled over the blistery clusterfuck  
The it girl is always only across the street  
The whiskey in this fang bite is actually  
More fretful than invasive  
At the photo show  
Everyone's moving around  
But I am sitting still  
Pretending to read some pretzels or something  
It's the feedback in me always  
Pretending to be pretty

XXXII.

What a lighthouse offers is sanctum  
And in sanctum comes the problem with words  
How to not overthink filaments

For every mugging in this municipality  
There are exactly  
One million people falling in love  
Not necessarily with each other  
But I believe that among a rendezvous of  
Caterpillars, butterflies will emerge  
With great force, and zombies will sit on their  
Stoops in great leisure, and zombies' children  
Sometimes everything truly is wrong  
But then chrysanthemums burst into lily twilight  
The persecution of doves ceases immediately  
It's a matter of lanterns, and light, and will  
Of starfish and hagglers and gin and AB positive  
The gills of the girl acquiescing to oxygen  
And the fluidity of interconnectedness looks  
Down to the people on the streets with glee  
Except at night, then my poems are climbing  
High above our skyscrapers, and they continue

XXXIII.

Towards the root notes  
Of New England climbs and dives  
Unfolded during the volume  
White thighs complete  
With nervous twittering  
Where's Montana  
Divvied up among ossified lookers-on  
And the elaborate equation  
Under an undulating Bronx  
"What's wrong with you?"  
Vibrating in quick audacity  
Where's the one thing that I bought  
No more shakiness  
Through the thistles  
Of an inaudible barre chord  
"Just off Main St." in Penobscot, Maine  
Under the chandelier light  
And not even wearing a brassiere  
I can hear everything there  
"Everything is wrong"  
Weighted the consonants incorrectly  
From the vowel shop by the harbor?  
Where's Wyoming?  
Pushing glass back into the dirt  
Into new English signs  
With you and more importantly  
I climb and dive